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[Despatch Abstract.]

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A MEMORANDUM OF THE QUESTION OF USING PANCHAYATS AS AN AGENCY IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION.

I.

Routine of past history and the present position:-

The system of utilising Panchayats as an agency for the spread of elementary education in rural areas was introduced in 1926. Sums were placed at the disposal of the Registrar-General of Panchayats (now Inspector of Local Boards and Municipal Councils) for the payment of grants to schools opened by Panchayats. Panchayats were then bodies administered by a separate enactment called the Village Panchayat Act. There were also Unions constituted for larger towns under the Madras Local Boards Act. Grnats sanctioned by the Registrar-General were available for the opening of the schools only by village Panchayats and not for schools opened by the Unions, as usually schools in Unions are maintained either by District Boards or by the Unions themselves.

2. In 1930 the Village Panchayat Act was repealed and the Panchayats constituted under that Act were brought within the scope of the Local Boards Act. Thus there are now two classes of Panchayats under the Local Boards Act- Union Panchats and Non-Panchayats. They are generally known as Major and Minor Panchayats. The Inspector sanctions grants for the schools opened by Minor Panchayats. The question whether any portion of the funds placed at the disposal of the Inspector could be utilised for the payment of grants to schools opened by Major Panchayats was raised in 1933 and it was decided in the negative.

3. Panchayats can open and maintain elementary schools (either Higher Elementary or Lower Elementary). It has been decided that the Inspector should not sanction grants towards the maintenance of Higher Elementary schools by Panchayats, apparently for the reason that the funds available with the Inspector are limited.

4. Under G.O. No. 670- Edn. dated 9-5-1932, it is open to the District Boards (formerly taluk Boards) to transfer the management of elementary schools to Panchayats. District Boards should make contributions to the Panchayats towards the cost of maintenance of the schools. It is open to the District Board to resume the management of the schools if they desire.

II.

The following table shows how Panchayats stand in the picture now.

Management.	Number of schools.		Boys. Number of pupils.		Number of teachers.	
	1939-40	1944-45*	1939-40	1941-45*	1939-40	1944-45
Government	1610	1542	80610	94048	2415	2737
District Boards.	13444	13505	983014	1080709		
Municipal Councils	985	946	158163	153936	39256	38230
Panchayats.	1463	1372	72401	69673		
Private a gencies	18820	15856	1292222	1269771	47786	41859
Grand Total	36322	33221	2586410	2668137	89459	82836
			Girls			
Government	48	41	5393	5343	384	404
District Boards	2494	2158	182880	177507	8173	9365
Municipal Counculs	441	454	66918	69854		
Panchayats	8	8	574	574		
Private agencies.	1483	1533	155343	176290	9790	12777
Grand Total	4874	4194	411085	429565	18347	22596

the year for which figures are available in the Secretariat.

III.

The general background at present:

On principle, the state is the best agency for running elementary schools, but it is the consliest also.

State responsibility can be maintained, however without state management of schools through control and through financing Local boards in this Province have been considered to be better than elsewhere; and aided agencies are in some quarters considered to be educationally efficient; and hence (a art from the question of finance) it was decided to continue these agencies.

IV.

Financial Implications of State Management:

1. If the State were to take over all Elementary schools from private managements, the extra cost would roughly be Rs. 82 lakhs.

2. If the State were to take over all Local Board elementary schools, the extra cost would be Rs. 89 lakhs, on the assumption that the proceeds of the existing local taxation would be made available to Government and the existing 'subsidies' made by Government are reckoned in.

3. If the State were to take over both the sets, the extra cost would be Rs. 171 lakhs.

4. The figures relate to the schools and staff as they now exist.

5. But as it has been accepted that the extra cost of the scheme of compulsion (worked now through local bodies- but the agency would be immeterial) should be borne on Provincial finances (question of revised salaries, however, is under special consideration and is to go before the Standing Finance Committee it would not make a difference for the future, except to the extent of the difference between local body scales of pay and the Government scales, whether expansion is through local board schools or schools run by Government itself.

V.

Panchayats an alternative to State-management on the one hand and to existing managements on the other.

A. As replacting District Boards.

1.(a) Advantages: Establishing a closer touch between the community and the school.

Play of personal factors and of factions and intrigues will be on a much smaller scale.

(b) (1). Disadvantages: Likelihood, however of the above factors operating in a more intense fashion; and

(2) difficulty of personnel making it likely that local opinions brought to bear on the institutions may not be informed.

(c) Reply to 'disadvantages'

Safeguards (b) (1) above: Allotment of teachers in shape of 'panel' to be made by a superior authority from a common register and formal appointment to be made by a sub-committee of panchayat c.f Collector regarding ministerial service); smaller punishments to be imposed by Suv-Committee; heavier punishment only by the Superior authority which may be either Panchayat or Educational: in former case in consultation with the latter); for transfers, similarly, such superior authority to be empowered; a Taluk normally to be the unit for transfers; appeals to be disposed of also by such authority; process of 'allotment' may be so regulated as to secure the communal rotation rule.

Re: (b) (2): that is a general problem in regard to Panchayat Orientation- and the answer, as generally should be that we must be preprared to overlook it and rely on actual experience to bring about an improvement.

2. Costs: If all local board schools are transferred to Panchayats, the staff should of course be paid at present local board rates. That will be an answer to the argument that Panchayat schools will be badly staffed becuase they are badly paid.

That will be feasible if the proceeds of the Education Cess and of the subsidies and grants now given by Government are apportioned to the various schools. A suitable formula will have to be devised for this. (The point that only Panchayat which have schools now will benefit cannot be helped). But from the apportionment the amount relating to the Educational establishment in the District Board (including D.B.E.O should be excluded and this amount should be adjustable to the credit of the Government who will take over that establishment, under the 'superior authority' referred to in previous para.

In such a case (1) the extra cost to Government should be only the difference between the District Board scales of pay and Government scales of pay, of the establishment last referred to- which should not be considerable and

(2) the extra cost to the Panchayats will only represent the difference, if any represented on the District Board budgets by contributions from the general fund to the Elementary Education Fund when the latter has not been adequate; but this, particularly spread out among the panchayats, should not be an appreciable burden on each Panchayat.

The existing method of supervision and inspection by the Education Department would remain unaltered; the extra administrativ work would stand provided for as indicated above by the transfer of the District Board's Educational establishment to the appropriate Government authority.

B. As replacing aided agencies:

1(a) Advantages: (1) Same as (1) under the section relating to replacement of District Board management.

(2) Better than leaving teachers subject to the vagaries of individual (usually low-level) managements in the matter of appointments, removal, discipline etc.

(3) Securing better remuneration- as it is postulated that payment by Panchayats should be at local board rates.

(b) Disadvantages: (1) Similar to that in (1) under the previous section.

2. as in (2) in previous section.

(3) Loss of elasticity in methods of running schools.

(6) Reply to 'disadvantages': Regarding (1) & (2) same as re: (1) & (2) in the previous section.

Regarding 3 the advantage of aided schools is over- rated at least in respect of 80 to 90% of the schools.

2. Costs: (a) To Government: If Government pay only the teaching grant (and equipment and building grants as occasion arises) which they now pay to aided schools, there will be no extra cost to Government and in fact there will be a saving of the extra 15% paid to managements as incidental charges (rent and contingencies) if it is insisted on that the Panchayats should bear this. As against this 'saving', however, will have to be set off the cost of setting up the establishment under the superior authority referred to in the previous section- as there will be no question here of a transfer of it from the District Board; these may probably square up.

(b) To Panchayats: They will have to bear the incidental charges referred to above and the difference between local board scales of pay of teachers and the grants made by Government as for aided schools. This is likely to be appreciable but should not be beyond the capacity of Panchayats particularly after their resources are generally increased after the new arrangements.

3. Some Complications: Transfers of aided schools to Panchayats voluntarily should not offer any difficulty; but if we are thining of compulsory transfer we may be up against the problem of denominational schools. Better leave it voluntary for the time being. It is likely that as a result of the recent direction that managements should contribute Rs.5/- towards the salaries of teachers a considerable number of aided schools might fall in; that would give a suitable opportunity for Panchayats to step in; this aspect may be watched.

6. If Panchayats take over both District Board Schools and Aided Schools:-

1. This has to be considered as a problem for all the Panchayats taken as a whole; for each Panchayat, taken separately, is not likely, generally, to take on both types.

2. The total extra costs, to Government and the Panchayats (all together) will be the total of those worked out under the sections: the establishment under Government contimeplated under the second section will still be necessary (besides that under the first) because of the additional number of schools and teachers to be dealt with by it.

D. New Schools:

The foregoing discussions have been mainly with reference to existing schools. Irrespective of the question whether Panchayats should take over such schools, there is no reason why new schools should not be allowed to be started by Panchayats_ if the advantages of management by them are conceded.

(a) In the normal course: When they start schools in the usual way in school-less areas the terms may be grants as for private aided agencies. Panchayats to pay teachers at present local board rates; their ability to do that and bear the other costs of maintenance to be examined in each case before sanction is given. The important point is that Government would not have greater commitment than if apprivate aided school were started (in fact less by the 15% grant for 'managerial expenses': the set-off against cost of Government establishment would not arise until very large number of such schools is started all over) and the teachers would be better paid than by a private aided agency.

(b) Schools opened under the compulsion scheme:

If the general advantages of Panchayat management are conceded, in places where new schools h ve to be opened when working out the scheme of compulsion it is appropriate that they should be opened by Panchayats under the same financial arrangements ad indicated above, which would ential in fact less expense to Government (in the case of new schools) than the present formula under which the entire extra cost is given as subsidy to the District Board.

E. Joint management by Panchayats:

In any scheme in which Panchayats are brought in it is likely that from the point of view of ecnomic size more than one Panchayat will have to share a common school. Provision will have to be made such as would enable admnistrative and financial arrangements to be made jointly by the Panchayats concerned.

F. Falling-in. Private-aided managements have recently been directed to pay Rs.5/- themselves to each teacher to make up a minimum of 30/- and 40/- respectively for Higher Elementary and Secondary teachers. When they fail to do this it is likely we will have to think of putting them under other managements. Panchayats may very well be permitted to take over such schools as they fall in after a verification of their financial resources. The position will be the same as indicated under 'New schools- in the normal course' above.

VI

Summing up: 1. The Central Advisory Board while making no pointed comment on private-aided agencies, cantigateed management by local bodies and suggested resumption by Government of all educational powers from local bodies except where those are functioning efficiently. By local bodies they obviously

meant bodies like district boards and not bodies like Panchayats. Going by the 'exception' referred to above, and by the assumption that with the ample powers of control and intervention vested in the Government and the D.P.I. the functioning of local bodies (District Board) was on the whole not unstatisfactory it was decided by the Post War Reconstruction Sub-Committee here and agreed to by Government, that all the existing agencies (District Boards as well as private aided) should continue to be utilised here and Government should step in only when other agencies were not available. Panchayats, however, were not specifically considered at all.

2. If State-management is ruled out, on account of cost primarily, Panchayats can very well be thought of as an alterative to either District Board management, or private-aided management or both.

3.- As in theory and in conditions of work District Board management approximates more closely to Government management, and in view of the general assessment of the working of District Boards referred to above, it may not be expedient to replace them by another type of local body (the Panchayat) wholesale.

4. There is a stronger case for replacing private aided agencies by Panchayats. If this, as a whoesale process, is considered inexpedient, there is still a strong case for such replacement in areas coming under compulsion as and when they so come. If even this, as being something of a wholesale process, is considered inexpedient, there is a strong case for permitting Panchayats (a) to open new schools (i) in school-less areas in the normal course and (ii) in connection with the introduction of compulsion and (b) to take over such schools as may 'fall' in consequence of the managements being unable to find from their own resources the amount necessary to make up the minimum for teachers' salaries now insisted on by Government. The terms that are assumed in this set of suggestions are that Government will give the Panchayats the same scale of teaching grants, and the same scale of building and equipment grants as occasion arises, as they now pay to private aided management;. that the Panchayats should pay the teachers the scale of salaries prescribed for District Boards and incur the expenses of management, and that they will have the resources to meet these expenses.

M.V. Subramanian,
Secretary to Government.
2.7.47.

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NOTE FILE:

The Secretary since prepared a memorandum on the question of using Panchayats as an agency in elementary education. Copies of the memorandum were circulated to H.M. (Education), (H.M. L.A) H.M. (Fin) and H.M. (P,W.) for discussion in connection with the proposed new village Panchayat Bill. After disucing the pros and cons of the proposal, the Secretary summarised the position as follows: --

"The Central Advisory Board while making no pointed comment on private-aided agencies, castigated management by local bodies and suggested resumption by Government of all educational powers from local bodies except where those are functioning efficiently. By local bodies they obviously meant bodies like district boards and not bodies like Panchayats. Going by the 'exception' referred to above, and by the assumption that with the ample powers of control and intervention vested in the Government and the D.P.I. the functioning of local bodies (Dt. Bd.) was on the whole not unsatisfactory, it was decided by the Post War Reconstruction Sub-Committee here and agreed to by Govern_ ment, that all the existing agencies (District Boards) as well as private aided) should continue to be utilised here and Government should step in only when other agencies were not available. Panchayats, however, were not specifically considered at all.

2. If State-management is ruled out, on account of cost primarily, Panchayats can very well be thought of as an alternative to either District Board management, or private-aided management of both.

3. As in theory and in conditions of work District Board management approximates more closely to Government management, and in view of the general assessment of the working of District Boards refered to above, it may not be expedient to replace them by another type of local body (the panchayat) wholesale.

4. There is a stronger case for replacing private aided agencies by Panchayats. If this, as a wholesale process, is considered inexpedient, there is still a strong case for such replacement in areas coming under compulsion as and when they so come. If even this, as being something of a whoesale process, is considered inexpedient, there is a strong case for permitting Panchayats (a) to open new schools (i) in school-less areas in the normal course and (ii) in connection with the introduction of compulsion and (b) to take over such schools as may 'may fall in' in consequence of the managements being unable to find from their own resenrces the amount necessary to make up the minimum for teachers' salaries now insisted on by Government. The terms that are assumed in this set of suggestions are that Government will give the Panchayts the same sca of teaching grants, and the same scale of building and equipment grants as occassion arises, as they now pay to private aided management; that the Panchayats should pay the teachers the scale of salaries prescribed for District Boards and incur the expenses of management, and that they will have the resources to meet these expenses."

It is not known what decision was arrived at in the matter by the Hon'ble Ministers. For orders whether the file may be circulated to H.M's mentioned above.

I submitted the memorandum in continuation of the discussion I had with the Cabinet Committee that is considering the Panchayats Bill. I expect the question will be considered in that connection

No action is now necessary on this point and at 'T' at p. 6. ante in view of the orders which passed (referred there) insisting all managements paying Rs. 5/- from their own funds. L.A. and Fin may see again before circulation.

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L.A. Dept.

The E. & P.H. dept. notes on pp 5-8 ante may be perused and the file passed on to Finance department u.o.

Finance.

Previous Fin. note on pp 4-5 above and the notes following may be perused and the case ~~xxxxxxxx~~ returned to E.P.H.

E.& P.H.

The notes on pp 5-6 ante summarises the proposals in this file.

In view of the note of the Secretary on page 8 ante, no further action seems necessary on the proposals. It may, however, be pointed out that in connection with the question of findi ng alternative managements for such aided elementary schools as may be closed where the managements are unable to pay the extra Rs.5/- to teachers in their schools from their own funds, H.M. (Edn) suggested that local bodies might take up the management of such schools and it is being delat with separately in the L.A. Department.

The file may be circulated to H.M. (Edn.) H.M. (L.A) and H.M. (Finance).

E. & P.H.

The papers may now be filed with the G.O. No. 1495 Edn. dated 31-7-46 at (1) ~~may be recorded~~.

May be recorded.
Sd. x x x x
13.9.46.

2015
G.O. Ms. No. ~~1495~~
Education D/~~31-7-46~~.
Abstract: Ele. Schools Aided- Taking over by the Government or by Panchayats - Papers recorded.

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Office Assistant,
Madras Record Office.

MC.